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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: PRT JALALABAD - UPDATE ON TANGI RETURNEE SITE

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REFTEL: KABUL 4368

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: PRT Officer met with Nangarhar Deputy Governor and Jalalabad Mayor to press again for a Letter of Intent for land ownership for the returnees in Tangi. This important step, that has to happen before any permanent structures can be built or any more international aid provided, has proved to be a bigger obstacle than expected. The Deputy Governor promised to prepare a document within 15 days, and the PRT will follow up again. END SUMMARY

2. (SBU) Jalalabad PRT Officer and Civil Affairs Officers met with Nangarhar Deputy Governor Alam Ishaqzai and Jalalabad Mayor Abdul Ghafor Pacha on October 30 to again press for a Letter of Intent to grant land to the returnees in Tangi. As outlined in reftel, the Tangi resettlement is an outstanding example of what an organized group of people can do on their own, and their efforts and initiative serve as an example for what other returnee groups could accomplish. Since they were forced to leave Pakistan in 2005, they have established a new community in a barren stretch of land, built tent cities, organized schools and mosques, and created the foundation for a well organized community, all with minimal support from outside organizations.

3. (SBU) The PRT has supported their effort with Humanitarian Assistance supplies, but neither the PRT nor other international organizations can provide permanent assistance until the provincial government provides some kind of formal recognition that they will grant them land rights, as they have done for the returnees in the Sheik Misri New Township. The PRT has physically taken the Governor, Deputy Governor, and former mayor to the site at different times to impress upon them the excellent example this community provides and how they have transformed the unwanted barren land into a thriving, well organized community. We have received repeated promises that a formal letter of intent will soon be forthcoming (the latest being a discussion between the Commander and the Governor's office on September 25 when they promised the letter within a week.)

4. (SBU) The Deputy Governor and Mayor listed a number of reasons why they have not issued the letter yet but promised to bring it up at either the November 2 or November 9 Administrative Meeting, and have the letter ready by November 10. PRT officials again explained

that the Afghans do not need to resolve all the urban planning questions, but neither the U.S. nor other international donors could proceed with fixed structures or substantial assistance until there was at least a firm statement of intent by Afghan authorities to allocate the land. For now, they had only to provide written notification of the intention to allocate the land to the Tangi community, and that would be enough for donors to proceed.

(Comment: One important reason that they may be dragging their feet is that these returnees are originally from Kunar Province rather than Nangarhar. The Deputy governor said that they would need to specify in the letter that only those returnees already there would be covered by the letter, or else the province would be flooded with returnees from all over Afghanistan. The PRT agreed that this was a reasonable stipulation.)

15. (SBU) Ironically, while in the meeting, the Deputy Governor received a phone call reporting that a group of Saardi (a sort of local militia of the Kuchi nomadic people) led by Mullah Malik Sultan had just arrived in Tangi and claimed that the land belonged to them, and the returnees needed to leave. The Deputy Governor asked if the PRT could send Coalition Forces to drive the Saardi away. The PRT explained that the ANP or ANA should go in first and try to resolve the issue. We stressed again that this is exactly the reason that we need them to prepare the Letter of Intent as quickly as possible. (Note: In the complicated area of Afghan land disputes, the PRT received reports on October 31 that the new Subgovernor of Khogyani District, Zalmani Dadak, may be involved with these disputes over the land, as he has influence and supporters in Behsud District, where Tangi is located.)

16. (SBU) On October 31, Embassy RefCoord raised the issue in a meeting with Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Abdul Qader Ahadi. The Deputy Minister was unaware of the issue but offered to look into it. RefCoord offered to provide further information on the settlement and stressed that the type of self-reliance exhibited by the returnees represents an example for

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all returnees and should be encouraged.

17. (SBU) Comment: PRT officials will check with provincial officials at the end of the latest 15-day deadline, and RefCoord will follow-up with Deputy Minister Qadir Ahadi. Embassy will raise to a high level if need be. While discouraged by the failure to live up to repeated promises, PRT is optimistic that with enough encouragement and interest shown by the PRT and others, the provincial officials will eventually provide the necessary documentation.

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